

Trust and Obey

Ruth 3 – Lesson for December 4, 2022

INTRODUCTION:

- Have you had the chance to travel internationally? If so, you have probably been exposed to cultural traditions that seem quite different from our American way of life. Do you have an illustration you could share? *You may even allow class members to share some stories...*
- Last week we were introduced to the idea of a kinsman redeemer. This is definitely a “different” way of doing things! In Jewish society, it was understood that when a man died that his nearest blood relative would marry the widow to continue the family’s name.
- In chapter 3, Naomi devises a plan to set in motion this process between Ruth and Boaz.
- Here’s what we want to be looking for as we work through this chapter: Ruth was put in an interesting position, in a country that was not hers, following customs that she was unfamiliar with. But she trusted Naomi, she trusted Boaz, and she trusted the Lord. All that was left was for her to obey.

OUTLINE:

1. The Plan (vs. 1-5)
 - a. Desiring to provide a home for Ruth, Naomi gives Ruth instructions for presenting herself as a potential spouse for Boaz.
 - b. She sends Ruth to find Boaz at the threshing floor. Ruth is to wait until Boaz finishes his meal and lies down, and then she is to lie at his feet.
 - c. The threshing floor was where the barley that had been harvested was stored. At night, someone would guard the grain against being stolen or eaten by animals.
 - d. The way Ruth dressed was not necessarily to make her more attractive to Boaz. Her clothing would indicate that her time of mourning the death of her husband was complete and she was now ready to remarry.
 - e. Something to think about: To Ruth, Naomi’s request would’ve sounded illogical. Ruth was a Moabite and would have been unfamiliar with Jewish customs. But she respected her mother-in-law and the God that she served, and was willing to do everything Naomi instructed her to do. What can we learn from Ruth’s example?
2. The Proposal (vs. 6-9)
 - a. In the middle of the night a startled Boaz awakes to find Ruth lying at his feet!
 - b. She then asks him to perform his duties as her family redeemer.
 - c. Ruth’s actions (which seem weird to us) demonstrated her dependence on Boaz. Lying at his feet was an act of submission.
 - d. Again, we see that Ruth had a special character. In chapter 1, she willingly left her family and homeland to be with Naomi. At this point in the story, she is even willing to put herself under Naomi’s interests and instructions.
3. The Problem (vs. 10-13)
 - a. Boaz explains to Ruth that there is another man more closely related to her than he is.
 - b. If that relative won’t marry her, he will. Boaz understood the right thing to do and was willing to see that it would be done one way or the other.
 - c. This is a significant point in the book. For Boaz to marry Ruth, there would be a price to pay both socially and financially. Remember that Ruth was a Moabite! Boaz was willing to pay that price for Ruth’s benefit!
4. The Precaution (vs. 14)
 - a. Boaz requests that Ruth stay until dawn and secretly leave so that her mission would not be misinterpreted by others.
 - b. Boaz wanted to avoid any possibility of even appearing to be improper with Ruth. What does this tell us about his character?

5. The Provision (vs. 15-17)
 - a. Boaz sends Ruth home with six measures of barley. This was a lot of barley – probably close to 80 pounds!
 - b. This was more than trying to provide Ruth an excuse for being out so early in the morning. This was a promise of Boaz that he would provide for her needs.
6. The Persistence (vs. 18)
 - a. Naomi reassures Ruth that Boaz will not rest until he has followed through concerning her request.
 - b. How could they be so sure as to what Boaz would ultimately do? His previous behavior gave them confidence in his future behavior. He was an upright and noble man.
 - c. Sometimes, in times of waiting, the best thing a person can do is to “sit still” and draw strength from God.

APPLICATION QUESTIONS:

- How do we learn to trust and obey the Lord?
- What makes this difficult to do?
- Can you share an example of a time when you were not sure of the outcome, but you were willing to obey what God had asked and to trust Him with the results?

TO DO: Read Ruth 4